

TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL MEETING
SUMMARY MINUTES
JANUARY 8, 2004 – HAMPTON INN LAKE MARY

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Diane Crews – Sanford Airport Authority
Pat Freeman – Altamonte Springs City Commission
Frank Fry – Holiday Inn Altamonte
Penny Leffel – SpringHill Suites Sanford
M.M. “Red” McCullough – McCullough & Associates
Bruce Skwarlo – Orlando Marriott Lake Mary
Helen Stairs – Helen Stairs Theatre
Dick Van Der Weide - Board of County Commissioners
Steve Wolfram – Council of Local Governments

STAFF PRESENT:

Doug Barclay – Central Florida Sports Commission
Sharron Barnett – Seminole County CVB
Karen Brown - Seminole County CVB
Suzan Bunn – Seminole County CVB
Ann E. Colby – County Attorney’s Office
Dave DiMaggio – Paradise Adv. & Marketing
Cedar Hames – Paradise Adv. & Marketing
Jillian Koepke – Paradise Adv. & Marketing
Sally Sherman – Deputy County Manager
Kathryn Townsend – Seminole County CVB

GUESTS:

Stephanie Andry – Residence Inn Altamonte Springs
Bill Beuret – Maison et Jardin Restaurant
Laura Conway – Candlewood Suites
Alyssa Diaz – Hilton Garden Inn Lake Mary
Lou Edwards – Hilton Orlando Altamonte Springs
Andrea Farmer – Central Florida Zoo
Apryl Green – SpringHill Suites Sanford
R.T. Hillery – City of Sanford
Dana Hirshburg – Homewood Suites
Linda Reynolds – Seminole Co./Lake Mary Reg. Chamber of Commerce
Rebecca Rhodes – Homewood Suites Orlando North
Jim Sega – Hilton Orlando Altamonte Springs
Jay Sheppard – Best Western Marina Hotel
Ron Siemans – Suncor Properties
David Steele – Comfort Inn Northeast Orlando
Jason Weeks – Altamonte Sports
Andrea Young – Comfort Inn & Suites Sanford

CALL TO ORDER

With a quorum present the meeting was called to order at 12:42 p.m. by Frank Fry, Chair. Introductions followed.

APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 11, 2003 MINUTES

A motion by Steve Wolfram to approve the minutes of the December 11, 2003 meeting was seconded by Pat Freeman and carried.

ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

In accordance with TDC Policy and Procedures, the current Vice Chair (Red McCullough) was elected as Chair by voice vote on a motion by Bruce Skwarlo and second by Pat Freeman. Suzan Bunn reminded members according to the rotation in established guidelines the next Vice Chair should be an elected official. Steve Wolfram was elected as Vice Chair by voice vote as nominated by Bruce Skwarlo and seconded by Pat Freeman.

PRESENTATIONS TO OUTGOING MEMBERS

Appreciation plaques for dedicated service and commitment were presented to Bill Beuret, Linda Marshall (absent) and Jay Sheppard.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION ON STAFF REPORTS

Bruce Skwarlo inquired how projections are typically calculated and requested clarification of dates on the Tax Collections Memorandum. Kathryn Townsend explained this year's projections were based on flat tax revenue, and our dates represent our fiscal year.

Doug Barclay gave a brief update on his efforts on behalf of sports. He reported there are approximately 20 events annually. Copies of events, location and dates are available. The Sports Commission expects to finalize the contract with 2004 Got Milk? in the next day or so. A number of event organizers have contacted the Sports Commission seeking alternative locations to hold their events. USA Rugby will use our training facility for their women's national teams. The Sports Commission plans to submit a bid for the 2005 Ultimate Players Association (Ultimate Frisbee) Championships. More baseball and water polo events are planned. Suzan Bunn added 2002-2003 activity reports from Altamonte Sports and Central Florida Sports Commission are available. She noted a significant increase in events booked to date in 2004.

Altamonte Sports is working on several upcoming softball events. Jason Weeks will provide a schedule of events at next month's meeting. A possible State Babe Ruth Baseball Tournament in July will bring in 25 to 30 teams for six or seven days. The date of the USA Softball Olympic Team's final stop in Seminole County before the Olympics will be announced soon.

MARKETING PRESENTATION – PARADISE ADVERTISING & MARKETING

Dave DiMaggio began the presentation with an update on the agency's efforts so far to move tourism in Seminole County forward. The agency is making minor changes to existing media placed by the previous agency to meet deadlines. Based on further research, a new marketing and media plan, new message, ads, etc. will be launched by the start of the next year. Results of a situational analysis of our promotional history indicate Seminole County's excellent geographic position and drive radius. In-state travel has increased significantly in the last two years. Site visits to properties by the agency indicate diversity in terms of size, leisure clientele, demographics, etc. We have not aggressively gone after group business and there is still some residual effect from 9/11. Additionally, the agency recognizes Seminole County's strong sports marketing history and brand as "Florida's Natural Choice."

Cedar Hames outlined strategies and recommendations for leisure, groups and sports marketing. The agency recommends concentration of leisure/group ads within a four-hour drive market. Associations, government and sports advertising will be statewide and beyond. The focus of the campaign will be the spring/summer shoulder markets and weekend business. The agency recommends branding through radio for its persuasiveness, minimal production cost, competitive edge with national advertisers and its reach to both leisure and group markets. This will be supported by small space ads in Sunday newspaper travel sections in various markets through the spring/summer season and partnership programs (such as Visit Florida co-ops). The agency recommends family-oriented consumer magazines with circulation within the 4-hour drive radius. Partnerships in full-page color advertising will be offered to hotels to subsidize our exposure. Expanding distribution of our Visitor Guide to Jacksonville to generate overnight business is suggested. Further recommendations concerning the Visitor Guide will be made after a thorough review of the program. More information is coming on a method the agency has devised to target the 4-hour drive radius through travel sites on the internet.

Corporate travel will be targeted through print advertising, online advertising and corporate-specific public relations. The agency recommends direct mail, online advertising, print advertising and public relations to expand associations business. National trade publications, direct mail, online advertising and public relations will target the sports market. Rack brochures, meeting planner guide, directories, ad production and web development will be used as marketing tools in all three categories.

Jillian Koepke informed members marketing and public relations share the same goal of “the destination of choice for the targeted market.” Story ideas target busy people with emphasis on Seminole County’s proximity to Orlando and beaches and its appeal as an alternative vacation getaway. Providing large companies with comparison/contrast of competing markets is economically advantageous. Public relations for sports will focus on historic moments in Seminole County (World Championship Soccer, USA Olympic Softball) and our many excellent sports facilities.

Dave DiMaggio discussed “branding” and “positioning.” The agency recommends a “split message” strategy. For out-of-state meetings and leisure business, the emphasis will be on central location (“The Center of Central Florida.”) The suggested message for in-state meetings and leisure business is “Out of Town, But Not Too Far Away.” New “tag lines” were demonstrated in several ad prototypes, and both concepts will include a message to drive weekend business. The look of the campaign is consistent and designed to distinguish us from our competitors.

In summary, Cedar Hames noted focus research in Jacksonville, Tallahassee and Orlando will be conducted in the next 2-3 weeks. The agency plans to present an in-depth report at the March TDC meeting. A brief question and discussion period followed.

OLD BUSINESS - The following individuals were selected to serve on the Promotional Guidelines Review Committee: Bill Beuret, Ann Colby, Frank Fry, Penny Leffel, Linda Marshall, Jamie Ross, Jim Sega, Bruce Skwarlo and Steve Wolfram. Other interested individuals should notify Red McCullough. The meeting is expected to last approximately two hours. Andrea Farmer, Doug Barclay and Jason Weeks will also attend. The CVB office will coordinate the date and notify participants.

Suzan Bunn distributed copies of the Zoo report, copies of a press release announcing flights on Vacation Express from Orlando Sanford Airport to Wilkes Barre/Scranton and the monthly occupancy report. In the future, TDC members will receive the occupancy report each month via email.

NEW BUSINESS - None

GENERAL DISCUSSION/ANNOUNCEMENTS – Red McCullough extended a special welcome to new members and commended Frank Fry for his excellent job as Chair this past year.

Bruce Skwarlo cautioned general managers and directors of sales to be aware of a person using the name Frank and/or Kevin Wright who is being actively pursued for hotel scams involving bad credit cards, etc. Anyone with information should contact the Lake Mary Police.

NEXT MEETING DATE AND LOCATION – February 12, 2004, location TBD.

ADJOURNMENT - There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 1:50 p.m.